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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. TEIRLINCK

(Belgium)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 113: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (continued) (A/49/176 and Add.1, A/49/219 and Add.1, A/49/406, A/49/445, A/49/527, A/49/564 and A/49/587; A/C.5/48/37 and Add.1 and A/C.5/48/45; A/C.5/49/5, A/C.5/49/6 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/C.5/49/13, A/C.5/49/14 and A/C.5/49/32)

1. Mrs. von BOCK und POLACH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the question of respect for the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials was of such importance that it should not be biennialized. The privileges and immunities of United Nations officials were dealt with in the Charter and the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. Those rights had been accorded not on a personal basis but in the interests of the Organization, and failure to respect them constituted a major obstacle to the implementation of the tasks assigned to the United Nations system by Member States.
2. Notwithstanding acceptance by all States of General Assembly resolution 47/28, since its adoption a substantial number of staff members had been killed without any of those responsible being brought to justice. The European Union recognized the importance of ensuring the personal safety of United Nations staff working in increasingly hostile and precarious conditions throughout the world and deplored the continued instances of detention and abduction. It appealed to the Governments concerned to cease their violations of the privileges and immunities of international officials. The situation of the staff of peace-keeping and humanitarian missions gave particular cause for concern. In time of crisis, locally recruited staff should benefit from the same protection as international officials.
3. Mr. SILALAH (Indonesia) said that the United Nations, which was the repository of the world's trust and faced challenges more formidable than ever, was beset by an unprecedented financial crisis compounded by an inadequate management culture.
4. The success of the United Nations depended on the quality of its staff, who should be recruited in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter. In that connection, notwithstanding the system of desirable ranges, 25 Member States, including Indonesia, were still underrepresented. He trusted that the concerns of the underrepresented countries would be taken fully into account.
5. His delegation congratulated the Secretariat on its efforts to increase the percentage of women employed in the Secretariat, but noted that they still constituted less than 30 per cent of senior level staff. The goal of an overall fifty-fifty balance by the end of 1995 remained distant. Efforts to increase the number of women, particularly in senior positions, throughout the system, should therefore be intensified.
6. Human resources management could only be assured through the provision of adequate financial resources. Moreover, at a time of rapid and fundamental

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change, the staff must be responsive to the demands of the international community. In that connection, he welcomed the proposals relating to the implementation of a modern human resources management system, including training, career planning and the new performance appraisal system. Decentralization and the delegation of authority would also strengthen the system.

7. The need to ensure the security and safety of United Nations personnel was more urgent than ever in view of the expansion of peace-keeping and humanitarian missions. His delegation welcomed the draft convention on the safety of United Nations and associated personnel, in the belief that all possible measures should be taken to protect all staff members participating in missions, particularly in high-risk areas.

8. Mr. MORCZYNSKI (Poland) said that, as the United Nations approached its fiftieth anniversary, multilateralism had become the key tool in shaping international relations. The performance of the United Nations had been crucial in that regard. Whether the United Nations would be able to live up to the increased expectations of its Member States depended on the quality of its personnel, starting from the top, and on the implementation of a new management culture which would reflect current and future priorities. His delegation accordingly welcomed the new approach outlined by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management.

9. The new emphasis on the decentralization of functions to programme managers, which would allow the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to concentrate on policy issues, was welcome. The new performance appraisal system should allow the staff to be fully productive while enjoying satisfying careers; the introduction of the system on a pilot basis was an approach that should be followed in the case of other managerial structures.

10. With regard to recruitment, the efforts of Member States to provide the Organization with suitable candidates should be closely related to the work of OHRM in identifying the Organization's needs. National competitive examinations and secondment offered ways to enrich the Organization. Appropriate procedures should be established to facilitate secondments both in and out of the Organization.

11. While training had been the focus of attention for some time, the report on staff training (A/49/406) suggested that the system had just begun to work. Expenditure on training in priority areas should be regarded as an investment rather than a cost.

12. Remuneration and conditions of service were matters of concern both to the staff and to the majority of Member States. The United Nations was losing its competitiveness and salary levels often did not correspond to the workload and complexity attaching to posts. The introduction of the new system of responsibility and accountability should permit a review of salary levels, equal attention being paid to the needs of Professional and General Service staff.

13. His delegation urged all States to adopt the draft convention on the safety of United Nations and associated personnel at the current session. It was unacceptable for the Organization not to guarantee the safety of staff performing mandated tasks.

14. Despite the progress that had been made in the representation of women in the Secretariat, the situation at the D-1 level and above remained unsatisfactory. His delegation supported the views of the Joint Inspection Unit in that regard. One solution might be for national recruitment services to identify qualified women and to submit candidacies to the Organization. Also with regard to the composition of the Secretariat, his delegation believed that, while primary attention should be given to the criteria of competence and efficiency, due weight should also be given to equitable geographical representation. Other criteria, such as the level of commitment of a Member State to peace-keeping operations, should also be considered in the staffing of peace-keeping and other field missions.

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/49/6, A/49/16 (Parts I and II), A/49/99 and Add.1, A/49/135 and Add.1, A/49/301 and A/49/310; A/C.5/49/27 and Add.1; E/1994/4 and E/1994/19)

15. Mr. KURIEN (India) agreed with the majority of delegations that the current format of the medium-term plan did not facilitate the attainment of the targets set in various legislative mandates. There was thus a need to devise a concise document focused on objectives and the means of achieving them. Accordingly, he welcomed the prototype of a new format of the medium-term plan, which provided an excellent basis for discussion. He also welcomed the division of the plan into a perspective and a programme framework, and agreed that programmes should be along sectoral lines with some congruence between the programmatic and organizational structures so as to enhance accountability for programme delivery. The plan should cover a four-year period.

16. In formulating the perspective, a proper balance must be maintained between current and future problems. The formulation of the plan should thus be an interactive process between Member States and the Secretary-General so that it could accurately reflect the objectives of the Organization and gain the support of Member States. The perspective portion of the plan should also indicate broad areas of priority, again maintaining an appropriate balance between them. The proposed establishment of a greater degree of synchronization between the medium-term plan and biennial budgets was also welcome.

17. Activities mandated by the General Assembly must find their proper place in the medium-term plan; the cost-benefit relationship could not be the sole criterion in programme planning and delivery. It should be borne in mind that the United Nations was not a private corporation counting its success in terms of profit and loss, but an organization that existed for the greater good of mankind. He therefore trusted that the programmatic content of the medium-term plan would be guided by the legislative mandates and priorities laid down by Member States, on the understanding that programmes should not be excluded even though they might not reach fruition within the four-year time span.

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18. On the contentious issue of programme 35, he said that the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights was the most comprehensive expression of concern to date in that area. The translation of that legislative authority into programmes was a difficult task demanding the utmost care. It was particularly important for the various aspects to be addressed in a balanced and cogent manner. His delegation was committed to the promotion of all aspects of human rights and to the allocation of the resources needed for that purpose provided that that did not affect resources for development activities. In particular, his delegation supported an increase in the technical assistance services provided by the Centre for Human Rights, on the understanding that such services were drawn from all regions. Given the understanding reached at Vienna that organs dealing with human rights should be kept apart from those dealing with peace and security, it would not be possible for India to support any aspect of the medium-term plan that might encourage such links, which would only progressively undermine the authority of intergovernmental bodies dealing with human rights.

19. His delegation was amazed that all six subprogrammes of programme 35 dealt only with political and civil rights. A new subprogramme on the right to development should be added, dealing with national and international obligations, and consideration should be given to a permanent mechanism for the implementation of that right. Any indicators developed in that connection should reflect the concerns of all countries and regions. He emphasized that all resources for all aspects of peace-keeping should come from the peace-keeping budget. Peace-keeping missions benefited particular countries, rather than all developing countries.

20. His delegation could also not support human rights monitoring by United Nations organs which did not have a clear mandate in that area. Since most United Nations offices were in developing countries, such activities would focus on the developing world and be inherently discriminatory, besides violating the sovereignty of States. Programme 35 should therefore be rewritten, taking into account the views of all States, as well as the failure of the Third Committee to reach a consensus thereon.

21. Mr. DAMICO (Brazil) said that his delegation attached great importance to all phases of the United Nations budget cycle, including monitoring and evaluation. In the case of programme planning, discussion of the medium-term plan provided Member States with an opportunity to consolidate mandates emanating from different legislative sources and to learn in advance from the Secretariat how such mandates would be interpreted and implemented. Thus, as the Secretary-General had noted the previous year, programme planning activities were a useful tool for enhancing the democratic character of the Organization and ensuring the effectiveness of the Secretariat.

22. However, he shared some of the concerns which had been expressed with regard to the medium-term plan. Most of the shortcomings that had been pointed out would be resolved by the proposed transformation of the plan's introductory section into a dynamic and analytical policy document, to be known as the "perspective". The strengthened medium-term plan would provide a balance

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between the long-term goals set forth in the perspective section and the short-term goals outlined in the programme mandates. It would thus be possible to set overall policy without losing sight of current mandates. It should be borne in mind that, regardless of the content of the medium-term plan, the Organization's final course of action would be determined through intergovernmental dialogue.

23. With regard to other proposed improvements to the medium-term plan, his delegation shared the view that the plan document should be as long as was needed to provide appropriate coverage for the issues addressed. The promotion of greater congruence between the plan and the Secretariat units entrusted with its implementation would ensure greater accountability. There was, however, a risk that the plan might need constant revision to keep up with changes in the Secretariat structure. In that connection, he shared the view of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) that the examples provided in the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/301) should be used for illustrative purposes only. He also agreed with CPC that the programme narratives should include the relevant legislative mandates.

24. His delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC concerning revisions to the medium-term plan. In that connection, it noted that 9 of the 23 programmes submitted for the consideration of Member States had been approved without modification. That attested to the excellent work done by the Secretariat. Member States had seen fit to contribute their views on several programmes falling within the purview of the Second and Third Committees. That practice was useful and the Chairmen of those Committees should be so informed.

25. His delegation fully endorsed the views of the Chairman of the Group of 77, as set out in the appendix to document A/C.5/49/27, on programme 11, Overall issues and policies including coordination, programme 12, Global development issues and policies, and programme 21, Public administration and finance. The views of the Third Committee on those matters would be welcome.

26. His Government was eager to participate in informal consultations on programme planning with a view to reaching a consensus resolution.

27. Ms. PENA (Mexico) said that her delegation endorsed the recommendations of CPC concerning the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan. CPC had not, however, been able to make recommendations on a considerable number of proposed programme revisions because the revisions had not yet been submitted to the corresponding sectoral or functional bodies. For that reason, CPC had considered it appropriate to seek the views of the Main Committees on the proposed revisions before they were considered by the Fifth Committee.

28. Her delegation had taken note of the letters submitted in that connection by the Chairmen of the Second, Fourth and Sixth Committees (A/C.5/49/27). It was a matter of concern that, in revising the medium-term plan, consideration had not been given to the legislative mandates supporting the proposed revisions and the intergovernmental bodies concerned had not been consulted.

29. Her delegation had commented elsewhere on some of the proposed revisions. It trusted that its observations with regard to programme 35, Protection and promotion of human rights, would be reflected in the revision. It wished also to emphasize the lack of correspondence between the text proposed for programme 35 and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

30. In general, it would have been easier for the Fifth Committee if the Main Committees had formulated agreed recommendations on the proposed revisions. The submission of individual positions in some cases had made the Committee's work more difficult. In any event, any revisions to the medium-term plan had to be in accordance with aims which were acceptable to all Member States.

31. According to document A/49/135, programme performance for the biennium 1992-1993 had unfortunately been marked by low performance indices, in particular with regard to development programmes. Those figures were the result of the restructuring process itself and the need to formulate new mandates. It was to be hoped that, once restructuring had reached the consolidation stage, performance indices would increase well beyond the current level of 70 per cent.

32. The proposed budget outline for the biennium 1996-1997, contained in document A/49/310, raised a number of issues. The Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 45/253 acknowledged the aims and priorities of the Organization. It was unfortunate, therefore, that certain functional activities were being accorded the same weight as substantive activities. While her delegation considered internal oversight services to be important, it was concerned that strengthening the budget for those services, as had been proposed, might make it difficult to ensure the necessary financing for the growing number of substantive activities.

33. In her view, budgetary estimates should be based on a fundamental premise: all the agreed programme activities must be accorded adequate financing for their implementation.

34. Generally speaking, her delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC concerning the proposed new format for the medium-term plan. However, if the Fifth Committee was to study the matter in full, it would need a comprehensive and detailed report from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the proposed format, which could subsequently serve as a policy guide for the United Nations. The document should be considered again by the Fifth Committee at its resumed session.

35. As presented, the prototype for the new format appeared to reflect emerging trends but failed to deal with recurrent problems. Thus, as recommended by CPC, the perspective section should strive to achieve a balance between new trends and persistent problems. The programme framework section should include only those activities emanating from intergovernmental mandates, the legislative mandate for which should be clearly identified.

36. While it was true that the annexes to the report on a prototype for the new format (A/49/301) were purely illustrative, they failed to include any reference

to the role of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Moreover, the text did not clarify how joint responsibility for a programme activity would be handled. It was important to devise a way to coordinate the efforts of organs which shared the responsibility for a programme.

AGENDA ITEM 105: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/49/16 (Parts I and II), A/49/34, A/49/98 and Corr.1 and Add.1-2, A/49/310, A/49/336, A/49/418, A/49/423, A/49/449, A/49/471 and Corr.1, A/49/560 and A/49/632; A/C.5/49/1 and A/C.5/49/28 and Add.1)

37. Mr. RANDRIAMALALA (Madagascar) said that the end of the cold war had opened up new and promising horizons for the United Nations. The time was ripe for a comprehensive reform of the system; with the help of new technologies, the Organization must adopt an entirely new way of functioning.

38. An efficient administration was the key to such reform. The core of every administration was its staff members, who must be competent in action and innovative in spirit. In return, staff needed job security and fair remuneration. Training programmes were also important to help the staff to meet new challenges as the work of the United Nations evolved.

39. The budget was another essential part of administrative functioning and should correspond to the programmes decided upon by the General Assembly. As for the restructuring of the Secretariat, an attempt should be made to harmonize the various sectors, while providing clearly delineated mandates and avoiding duplication of efforts. The functioning of United Nations bodies and organs should be simplified and the number and length of reports and resolutions should be reduced as much as possible. The length of statements made by delegations should also be limited. In that connection, he referred to a suggestion that had been made regarding the installation of equipment to time the length of statements and said that, before any move was made in that direction, a cost-effectiveness study should be carried out.

40. His delegation shared the view of the Secretary-General that the restructuring of the Secretariat was an ongoing process alternating between reform and consolidation. Changes must be instituted, however, or the Organization might not be ready to respond to new challenges. He also agreed that the restructuring of the Secretariat should be accompanied by the restructuring of intergovernmental organs. It was important that the process of restructuring must not have an adverse impact on any programmes, in particular those designed for developing countries.

41. With regard to internal monitoring, he welcomed the appointment of the new Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services. During its brief existence, the Office for Inspections and Investigations (OII) had called attention to deficiencies, waste and mismanagement; in general, his delegation endorsed its recommendations contained in document A/49/449. The Office of Internal Oversight Services, which had assumed the functions of OII, must be provided with the necessary resources as rapidly as possible. Regulations and

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procedures should be introduced where necessary, and sanctions should be established to cover all possible offences. If the Office was to be effective, it was essential to develop an efficient and transparent system of accountability and responsibility and to promote a new "management culture". United Nations personnel must respect the Organization's policies, rules and regulations.

42. His delegation would appreciate further information on two pending matters. First, referring to the treasury loss of \$4 million in Somalia in April 1994, he asked what measures had been taken with regard to those responsible and what had been done to prevent a recurrence. Second, on the question of the automatic turnstiles which had been installed, at Headquarters at considerable expense, and which had apparently never functioned, his delegation also wished to know what measures had been taken with regard to those responsible. It hoped that the United Nations was not becoming a testing ground for untried new technology.

43. His delegation encouraged the Office of Internal Oversight Services to increase its inspections so that the Organization's resources would not be wasted or used for purposes other than those intended. In that connection, it was essential that the relevant General Assembly resolutions and the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the Board of Auditors should be implemented and that United Nations regulations should be respected.

44. His delegation favoured the establishment of a system which would provide rewards for exceptional performance and sanctions for ineffective staff. It endorsed the recommendations in that connection made by the Joint Inspection Unit in document A/49/219. The recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the recommendations of JIU (A/49/632) required further study. As for the views of the Board of Auditors, as set forth in document A/49/471, he felt that they needed to be further developed.

45. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that, as the Secretary-General had the overall responsibility for the organization of the Secretariat, her Government had always extended its full cooperation to him in his efforts to restructure the Secretariat. In that connection, she greatly appreciated the Secretary-General's commitment to a dialogue with Member States about the reform process.

46. The restructuring of the Secretariat had involved the transfer of a sizeable number of staff, a process which had been hampered in part by the lack of sufficient office space. The availability of office space should be a priority element in future restructuring efforts. In her delegation's view, the most efficient solution would be to make full use of existing office space instead of paying high prices for additional space. In that connection, she would appreciate information about office space available at the main duty stations, the cost of such space and predictions about future developments in that area. Her delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would keep those considerations in mind when preparing the budget proposals for the biennium 1996-1997.

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47. In its resolution 48/228, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to identify activities that would benefit from relocation to Vienna and had urged him to submit adequate proposals no later than at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. She appreciated the Secretary-General's statement that the matter remained under active consideration and hoped that proposals in that regard would be submitted within the stated time-limit. She pointed out that relocation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) would leave free an entire complex in Vienna which her Government had been providing to the United Nations virtually rent free. Austria would be glad to continue discussing with the Secretariat the question of relocating activities to Vienna.

48. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal regarding the establishment of unified conference services at Vienna under the responsibility of the United Nations since it represented the most efficient and cost-effective solution for Member States.

AGENDA ITEM 114: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (A/49/30 and A/49/480; A/C.5/49/7, A/C.5/49/10 and A/C.5/49/33)

AGENDA ITEM 115: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/49/9 and A/49/57; A/C.5/49/3 and A.C.5/49/7)

49. Mr. STÖCKL (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and Austria, said that they recognized the importance of the tasks performed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and wished to reaffirm the fundamental importance of the common system, which was a cornerstone of the coordination of the United Nations system as a whole. All the organizations concerned had voluntarily accepted the common system and the ICSC statute; they must also accept the corresponding obligations. Secretariats should consistently consult the common system bodies before submitting proposals relating to staff conditions of service to any governmental body of their own. In particular, the governing bodies of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) should respect their obligations to the common system. The recent decision of ILO to grant promotion based on length of service was a particular cause for concern.

50. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on decisions of Administrative Tribunals (A/49/480), ICSC must be allowed not only to provide information to Administrative Tribunals in cases involving appeals against decisions taken on the basis of ICSC action but also to comment on the application of its recommendations by the administrations of the common system. It should have the same rights with respect to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

51. On matters concerning the common system, the ICSC rules of procedure were based on the expectation that staff representatives and administrations should, as far as possible, express a common view. The principle that the Commission

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should not seek or receive instructions from Governments, organizations or staff associations must be constantly borne in mind, but the rules of procedure did provide for consultations among the parties. The statements made in the Committee concerning the functioning and the legitimacy of the Commission had been noted. While the Commission was responsible for its relations with staff representatives, it was a technical body whose responsibilities were clearly defined by its statute. It was regrettable that the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) should once again be contemplating suspending its participation in the work of the Commission.

52. As for the remuneration and conditions of service of the staff, the European Union and Austria were ready to consider any evidence of recruitment and retention difficulties in the organizations. Such evidence had not yet been provided. Retention of staff was determined by the overall conditions of service and not merely by the salary scale. The staff of the United Nations were an important asset, and 79 per cent of the Organization's financial resources were allocated to staff costs. However, the overall costs of international organizations must remain affordable, and an appropriate balance must be struck between staff and other costs. Member States must promote the competitiveness of employment in the United Nations and guarantee the integrity of the common system. Policy improvements were required, in particular with regard to performance appraisal and personnel management.

53. It was regrettable that ICSC had not been able to present the results of its study on the identification of the highest-paid civil service at the current session of the General Assembly. The Commission had decided to collect information on the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for reference purposes, even though there were substantial differences in the modes of financing of the three international civil services mentioned by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). In its study the Commission must take into account the universality and uniqueness of the United Nations, as well as factors such as job security which were not part of the pay system.

54. The European Union and Austria would support the Commission's proposal for an increase in the base/floor salary scale and its recommendations with regard to dependency allowances for staff in the Professional and higher categories and the education grant. They shared its view that hazard pay provided some compensation to staff serving in dangerous conditions and would welcome an explanation of the linkage of hazard pay to the base/floor salary scale and of the proposed increase. It might not be appropriate to include the special pay systems of the comparator in the salary and margin calculations; that would produce an across-the-board increase without addressing the recruitment and retention problems which such systems were designed to resolve. The new performance appraisal system for the United Nations Secretariat was welcome, and the Commission's work in that area should be taken into account by all the organizations. The Committee should bear in mind the decision of the General Assembly in resolution 47/216 II G to revert to the conditions of service of staff at the assistant-secretary-general, under-secretary-general and equivalent

levels at the earliest possible opportunity. Any review should include the conditions of service of elected officials in the common system.

55. The organizations, their staffs and ICSC itself all supported the Flemming principle, which required that General Service salaries should be based on the best prevailing local conditions and private-sector comparators. However, the application of the General Service survey methodology agreed by the Commission and endorsed in resolution 47/216 III was a matter of concern to the staff. The Commission should examine the proposals put forward by the staff representatives at its latest session and carry out further reviews, with staff participation, at every headquarters duty stations. Any negative results of the process that might occur must also be accepted.

56. The European Union and Austria noted the positive judgement on the actuarial sufficiency of the Joint Staff Pension Fund even though on one central measure of actuarial sufficiency the position had deteriorated slightly since the 1990 valuation. The Fund and its investments would have to be monitored and managed very carefully over the coming years. He therefore welcomed the fact that the changes recommended by the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board were almost neutral in their impact on the actuarial valuation. It was difficult to evaluate the Fund's performance since most of the investments were made outside North America and not in dollars. Most of the States members of the European Union had granted tax exemption status to such investments, and global indices now provided some comparisons for assessment of their performance. The Secretary-General and his representative for the investments of the Fund must continue to take all necessary steps within the established criteria to achieve the optimum return on the investments. Proposals on how to enhance the Fund's performance would be welcome. In any event, the interests of the participants must remain paramount.

57. Mr. BEL HADJ AMOR (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission) said that ICSC was grateful for the support expressed for its endeavours to maintain the common system, in the interest of all concerned. The Commission was aware of its role as a leader, catalyst and facilitator of necessary change. Since it was not helpful to engage in disputes with delegations, he would respond only to the technical and substantive observations made on the report of ICSC (A/49/30).

58. The Commission had taken no decision on the restoration of the mid-point of the net remuneration margin range. The options were reviewed in paragraph 72 of the report and consideration of the matter would be resumed at the Commission's spring 1995 session. It did not wish to change the rules in the middle of the game but rather to provide an objective basis for managing the margin when the 1990-1994 guidelines lapsed.

59. There appeared to be general acceptance of the ICSC recommendations with regard to a revision of dependency allowances, but one delegation had requested further details. The Commission's calculations had been based on the established "seven headquarters" methodology, which assessed the United States dollar values of social security payments, tax exemptions and deductions for

dependants as a basis for adjusting benefits for United Nations staff; the Commission had reviewed the specific calculations at its spring 1994 session. Information had also been requested about the selection of the duty stations for which local-currency dependency benefits were specified and why they differed from those selected for the education grant entitlement. The bases for calculating dependency allowances and the education grant were fundamentally different. The dependency allowances were based on a single global figure derived from the weighted average of the tax and social security benefits at the seven headquarters duty stations and were not related to the national benefits available at each duty station. In contrast, the education grant was calculated on a local basis in order to reflect local costs. The selection of the entitlement currency was thus determined by different considerations. In the case of dependency allowances, there had been substantial devaluations in the hard-currency areas since the previous review in 1992, and maintenance of the entitlements in local currencies rather than in the United States dollar would have worked to the disadvantage of hard-currency duty stations. Obviously, the hardness of a currency was not a consideration in the calculation of the education grant.

60. There was clear support for the recommended increase in the base/floor salary scale, but reservations had been expressed about the linkage of the scale to the mobility and hardship allowance and to the level of the matrix. It should be noted that the concept of a linkage between a salary scale and the adjustment of hardship allowances was used by the comparator civil service. The linkage of hazard pay to the base/floor salary scale in the case of internationally recruited staff had been intended to provide a more systematic approach. The concern expressed in the Committee had been noted, and the matter would be taken up during the review of the mobility and hardship system scheduled for 1996.

61. The Commission shared the disappointment of some members of the Committee that it had not made more progress on its review of the application of the Noblemaire principle. The review involved the cooperation of external entities and a vast amount of data collection and analysis. Work was, however, well advanced on comparisons with OECD and the World Bank. Substantial progress had also been made with one of the potential comparator civil services, but the other potential comparator had found it difficult to continue participating in the study. It would be helpful if the General Assembly could encourage the two civil services to continue to assist the Commission, which would try to submit the completed study to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

62. Two substantive points had been raised about the education grant proposals. First, there appeared to be a misunderstanding about the methodology used. He could assure the Committee that the recommended increases were in strict conformity with the methodology adopted in 1992, which was based on demonstrated need. Upward adjustments had been recommended in only a minority of currency areas because only in those areas had a need been demonstrated as indicated by the number of claims in excess of the maximum admissible expenses. In other currency areas the dual criterion of fees and cost had not been met. The

current methodology was superior to the former global averaging system. Detailed calculations and examples could be made available.

63. Second, the point raised about tertiary education was answered in the first two sentences of paragraph 270 of the report. The question of the scope of the education grant had been reviewed most recently in 1989. If there were now new facts to be taken into consideration, the Commission would add the topic to its work programme, the cost data for a breakdown of tertiary and other expenses would have to be obtained from the organizations.

64. The application of the current methodology for General Service salary surveys was in mid-cycle. At its next session, the Commission would consider its response to the issues raised by FICSA and the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) in the context of its preliminary study of survey methodologies and would undertake a comprehensive review on completion of the current round. Meanwhile, it would be guided by the position which it had reaffirmed at its latest session that the methodology attempted to strike a balance between consistency of approach and the flexibility needed to address local conditions in each headquarters duty station (A/49/30, para. 208).

65. ICSC was grateful for the support expressed for its work on the National Professional Officer category. It would continue to keep the matter under review because the expanding use of such officers was of fundamental importance for the international civil service.

66. With regard to performance management, the Commission's role was to provide a policy framework within which each organization could implement an action programme. Progress had not been as great as could be desired in the area of merit recognition, but the lack of properly functioning appraisal systems was bound to engender caution. A further report would be presented in 1997. Programmes could not, however, be operated on a shoestring, and the organizations should allocate sufficient resources to translate plans into action.

67. One delegation had recommended that all the organizations should allow the recruitment of spouses of staff members. Six years earlier, ICSC had requested the organizations to amend their staff rules so as to permit such recruitment. It had reiterated the recommendation in 1992, but some organizations had still not complied.

68. Some delegations had questioned the recent ILO decision regarding personal promotions. Once formal notification had been received from ILO of the action taken by its Governing Body, the Commission would examine the question and report back to the General Assembly.

69. The Commission was to examine the question of appointments of limited duration in 1995. Its work so far had been limited to two pilot projects being conducted by the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It now intended to take the matter up more actively.

70. In conclusion, he re-emphasized the need for a cooperative effort to carry forward the Commission's challenging programme. In particular, ICSC valued the contributions made by the staff representatives. It was to be hoped that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations would herald an era of renewed trust and goodwill among all the parties concerned.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.